

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 SOFIA 02696 211511Z
ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01
PA-01 SS-15 NSC-05 L-03 H-01 SY-05 /054 W
----- 081351 /46

P 211422Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2155
INFO USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SOFIA 2696

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: OEXC, SCUL, PFOR, BU
SUBJECT: BULGARIAN OFFICIAL REACTION TO LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC
"INCIDENT" IN SOFIA DECEMBER 7

REF: SOFIA 2587

1. SUMMARY: AS REPORTED REFTEL, DURING DEC 7 LAPO PERFORMANCE, THE ORCHESTRA, LED BY ITS MANAGER AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR, REFUSED TO GO ON STAGE FOR SECOND PART OF CONCERT (WHICH WAS BEING BROADCAST LIVE) UNLESS A SMALL GROUP OF "STUDENTS" WERE ADMITTED TO THE HALL. ON DEC 20 AMBASSADOR WAS CONVOKED TO MFA BY DAMYANOV, HEAD OF CULTURAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT, AND GIVEN NOTE VERBALE PRECEDED BY ORAL COMPLAINT. THE WORD "PROTEST" WAS NOT USED, AND BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT THE EVENT HAD NO POLITICAL CHARACTER. HOWEVER, DAMYANOV STRESSED, AS DID THE NOTE VERBALE, THAT INCIDENT DID NOTHING TO CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN BULGARIA AND THE US. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED REGRETS AND COMPLIMENTED BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES ON THEIR HANDLING OF LAPO VISIT INCLUDING THE DEC 7 EVENT. END SUMMARY.

2. AMONG POINTS MADE BY DAMYANOV WERE: INCIDENT HAS CAUSED "SERIOUS CONCERN AND ANXIETY" IN THE MINISTRY, PARTICULARLY
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 SOFIA 02696 211511Z

LARLY SINCE SO MUCH GOOD WILL HAD BEEN SHOWN BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS IN MOVING FORWARD THEIR CULTURAL RELATIONS DURING THE YEAR, AND SIGNATURE OF CULTURAL AGREEMENT APPEARS IMMINENT. INCIDENT "INEXPLICABLE" TO GOB WHICH FOUND IT HIGHLY IMPROPER, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS NOT INTERPRETED AS DELIBERATE ACT. FACT THAT SOME COULD NOT OBTAIN TICKETS GAVE LAPO NO GROUNDS TO

DISRUPT PERFORMANCE AND CAUSE DELAY OF LIVE RADIO BROADCAST. CONTRARY TO STATEMENTS MADE BY FLEISCHMANN (AND APPARENTLY BROADCAST BY BBC), BULGARIAN GOVT HAD MADE SPECIAL EFFORT TO GET TICKETS INTO HANDS OF MUSICALLY KNOWLEDGEABLE AND SOPHISTICATED AUDIENCE, WHICH WAS PRECISELY THE REASON WHY FEW TICKETS HAD BEEN AVAILABLE AT BOX OFFICE. ALLEGATIONS THAT GOB HAD RESERVED TICKETS TO "SPECIALLY SELECTED" (RATHER THAN TO MUSICALLY INTERESTED) PEOPLE WERE GRATUITOUS, INCORRECT AND DAMAGING.

3. KEY SENTENCE OF NOTE VERBALE WAS "MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ARE OF OPINION THAT BEHAVIOR AND ACTIONS OF THE CONDUCTOR AND DIRECTOR OF THE ORCHESTRA ARE ABSOLUTELY CONTRARY TO GENERALLY ACCEPTED NORMS FOR GUEST-PERFORMERS AND CANNOT BUT BE CLASSIFIED AS AN ACT OF IMPROPER BEHAVIOR AND DISRESPECT FOR BOTH THE BULGARIAN AUDIENCE IN THE CONCERT HALL AND THE ESTABLISHED REGULATIONS FOR ORGANIZING CULTURAL EVENTS IN THIS COUNTRY. THEREFORE THE INDIFFERENCE OF THE EMBASSY AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ORCHESTRA'S VISIT TO SOFIA IS RATHER SURPRISING." (THE NOTE ALLEGED THAT THE STATE DEPT REPRESENTATIVE ACCOMPANYING THE ORCHESTRA ON ITS TOUR, AND THE EMBASSY'S P&C OFFICER, DID NOT EXERT THEMSELVES SUFFICIENTLY TO GET THE ORCHESTRA TO RESUME ITS PERFORMANCE.)

4. AMBASSADOR, IN REPLY, GAVE DAMYANOV CATEGORIC ASSURANCE DEC 7 EVENTS POSSESSED NO POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE, AND NOTED THAT NO SUCH MOTIVATION AHD BEEN ASCRIBED TO LAPO. EXPRESSING PERSONAL REGRETS, WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN COMMUNICATED TO SOFIACONCERT (AND OF WHICH DAMYANOV SEEMED AWARE), AMBASSADOR SAID HE COULD NOT SPEAK FOR LAPO BUT BELIEVED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 SOFIA 02696 211511Z

EVENT COULD BE BEST UNDERSTOOD AS OUTGROWTH OF EMOTIONAL ATMOSPHERE AND TEMPERAMENTAL CHARACTER OF HIGH-STRUNG ARTISTS. AMBASSADOR REJECTED THE IMPUTATION THAT ESCORT OFFICER AND P&C OFFICER HAD NOT TRIED TO GET THE ORCHESTRA BACK ON STAGE. HE CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT ALL CONCERNED WERE FULL OF ADMIRATION FOR EFFICIENCY OF ARRANGEMENTS IN SOFIA, PARTICULARLY AFTER THE ORCHESTRA'S UNHAPPY EXPERIENCES ELSEWHERE.

5. AT THE END OF THIS DISCUSSION IT WAS AGREED TO REGARD THE MATTER AS CLOSED.

6. COMMENT: INTERVAL BETWEEN INCIDENT OF DEC 7 AND MEETING DEC 20 INDICATES CAREFUL PREPARATION OF NOTE WHICH WAS PHRASED SOMEWHAT STRONGER THAN THE ORAL REMARKS MADE BY

DAMYANOV, WHO SPOKE MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER (AND USED TERMS "SERIOUS CONCERN AND ANXIETY" TWICE). DAMYANOV'S REFERENCE TO GOODWILL AND COOPERATION, CULTURAL-SCIENTIFIC

AGREEMENT AND RECENT EXCHANGES ALL REFLECT CONTINUING
BULGARIAN INTEREST IN STRENGTHENING CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH
US. WE THUS HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT LAPO BEHAVIOR
IN SOFIA WILL NOT HAVE LASTING EFFECT ON US-BULGARIAN CULTURAL
COOPERATION. ARTISTICALLY, OF COURSE, THE ORCHESTRA WAS
ONE OF THE GREATEST THINGS THAT HAS HAPPENED HERE IN SOME
TIME.
HERZ

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MUSIC, CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS, NOTE VERBALE, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SOFIA02696
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760468-0532
From: SOFIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761224/aaaaaur.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SOFIA 2587
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <09 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BULGARIAN OFFICIAL REACTION TO LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC "INCIDENT" IN SOFIA DECEMBER 7
TAGS: OEXC, SCUL, PFOR, BU, US, LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006